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A DOUBLE EVENT.

IGNORANT as we are of how that half of the world which is not *our* half contrives to exist, we are still more in the dark as to its opinions. Let us take as an extreme case—that of crowned heads, for instance, and their belongings. What do *they* think, if they ever think of it at all, are the opinions of the rest of their fellow-creatures who are not in the *Almanach de Gotha*, and especially with respect to themselves? If I were a 'sweet young prince'—say His Serene Transparency of Timbuctoo—it seems to me that I should have an uneasy sensation that the great mass of mankind was playing some elaborate and costly joke upon me, as the Nobleman played on Christopher Sly. 'For why,' I should say to myself, 'is all this enormous fuss made about such as I am; no better (perhaps worse), no wiser (perhaps less so), than the majority of those I see about me, so anticipative of my wishes, and subservient to my will? I have certainly done nothing for the particular benefit of mankind, nor have I, that I know of, any particular intention of doing so. Why, then, am I treated with infinitely more honour than those who have conferred the greatest advantages on the human race? I have stamped out no disease, like Jenner (I don't know the great men of Timbuctoo, or I would instance *them*), nor invented any means of killing pain, like Simpson; I have not saved my country, like Nelson or Wellington; I have not filled men's minds with noble thoughts, like Shakspeare; nor won smiles from aching hearts and weary heads, like Dickens; and yet, if all those great men had been united in my proper person, with a hundred more to boot, not one half the to-do would have been made about me that there is now!'

Of course, if the notion of Divine Right does really still exist in the mind of any Transparency except the Emperor of Germany, this state of things would be accountable, and be acquiesced in without surprise; but if not, I protest, that if I were a royal prince, and possessed my present sense of humour, I could not stand it. I should roar with laughter when the venerable gold-stick

in waiting walked backwards before me, and the six grooms of the bedchamber brought me my shaving-water in a golden pot. In the midst of some gorgeous banquet, and while somebody, whom I never before set eyes on, was on his legs declaring that all Timbuctoo was ready to shed the last drop of their blood for myself and my family, I should cry out with Christopher:

For God's sake, a pot of small ale.

If it were possible, I should like to be made a Transparency for four-and-twenty hours, and then come back to my attic and make ten pounds by describing the experience. It is possible that I should not think it so very remarkable that all Timbuctoo should make such a fuss about *me*, but if so, I am a vainer man than I take myself to be. I am sure I should have a very mean opinion of the intelligence of my temporary subjects, and I am afraid that Serene Transparencies in general have not a very high one of theirs. It seems to me almost impossible that it should be otherwise, and quite impossible that they should be able to enter into the feelings of those not in the *Almanac* aforesaid. Serene Transparencies are, of course, an extreme case: but that of all great lords and dignitaries—provided they are hereditary dignitaries, and have not been 'through the mill' of work-a-day life—must be similar to it, though isolated in a less degree. 'Upper dockyard people don't know lower dockyard people, lower dockyard people don't know small gentry, small gentry don't know tradespeople; *Commissioner* (or head of the yard) don't know anybody.'

As to our knowing the views and opinions of those beneath us, that is of course out of the question. Until the Commune reared its giant head in blood and flame, there was probably not one in a hundred of the upper classes of Europe that was aware of its existence, though its shapeless proportions had been growing for years in the minds of millions. Nor is the gulf between our social classes more broad or more easily bridged over than the great gaps caused by difference of creed. The ideas of an Ultramontane Catholic, for example,

would be unintelligible, and even smack of Hanwell, if expressed to a Scotch Calvinist; and each of these religionists, as opposite as the poles, is perfectly sure he is right. If only the matter could be narrowed to *that* ground—the choice of one of two—theology would be made comparatively easy for us; but, alas! there are half-a-hundred sects who are equally sure of the correctness of *their* creed, though they do not perhaps enforce it under such threatened penalties; and they too know nothing of one another's views, or only just so much as serves for the purpose of vilification. Unhappily, the very best men—in the usual sense of the term—that is, the most moral, religious, and orthodox—move in very contracted circles. They do immense good, it is not to be denied, but they call the righteous rather than sinners to repentance. They are so good (according to their own ideas), that they cannot bear plain speaking from those who entertain sceptical, or even less orthodox opinions; it shocks them where no shock is intended; like anchorites, they shrink within their holy cells to pray for the conversion of the wicked wit, instead of sticking to him out in the open, and converting him on the spot. Few better men, for example, have ever lived in England than the author of *The Christian Year*, but when one considers that he kept the Martyrdom of Charles I. as a sacred day in his own house, even when the church Prayer-book had done with it, it is impossible to imagine that such a man could have ever understood—though he doubtless regarded them with a certain charity—the good intentions of men like Buckle, Mill, or even Bishop Colenso. Nor is it probable, on the other hand, that Mr Buckle would have made much of Mr Keble. This isolation of men's minds is exceedingly to be regretted. If some of our intellectual Gallios would but exercise their minds in introducing theological and other opponents to one another, without offence—would edit the works of John Stuart Mill, so as to recommend them to Archdeacon Denison, for instance, or those of Miss Braddon to suit the leisure hours of Miss Yonge, how much better we should all understand one another. As it is, we are either 'stuck up' by wealth or position a few impassable inches above our fellow-creatures, or are herded together in cliques and coteries, beyond which, we fancy, there is nothing worth knowing. The *nil humanum a me alienum* of the poet, the *nothing common or unclean* of the apostle, have no significance for us; even the Eastern sultan, *blâsé* and enervated with pleasure as he doubtless was, gave himself the trouble occasionally to disguise himself as an ordinary individual, in order to see for himself how his subjects lived; but now-a-days we do not care how our fellows live, nay, perhaps do not distinctly 'see the necessity' of their living at all.

It will be easily understood that these reflections upon the callousness of mankind are but a prelude to the statement that the present writer is himself quite guiltless of such reprehensible behaviour, just as when one of the clergy declaims to us against a wicked world, we are well aware that he will presently explain how he himself does not belong to it. And indeed it is quite true that I pass much of my time in investigating the character and conduct of a class of persons about whom political and social economists know nothing, and theologians very little. I allude to the London thieves.

This order of persons, it may be said, are very numerous, and comprise (to begin with) at least three parts of the population of the Inns of Court. I do not refer, however, to those who 'what the wise do call convey'—the Conveyancers—but to the *bonâ fide* professional robbers of the metropolis. If numbers in a society are, as it is said, always in its favour, since it gives one ampler opportunities for making selection of our friends, my acquaintance with these gentry should offer some advantages, since they amount, according to our Criminal Statisticians, to thirty thousand persons.

How came you to know them?

That is a question, respected reader, which I am not bound to answer; and yet, lest you should think that I shelter myself under that law which permits a witness to be silent upon a matter in which speech may criminate him, I will say at once that I am, and always have been, an honest man; but having a great curiosity to become acquainted with rogues and rascals in the rough, I procured an introduction to a few of the most famous of them, by favour of Inspector Swisher. The inspector has always his eye upon them, but it rests there in quite an amicable way, until one of them gets into trouble and is wanted; then he takes a couple of files (of police), a pair of darbies (handcuffs), and, as the newspapers express it, 'effects a capture.' It is his painful duty so to do. But in the intervals of business, the thieves and he are very good friends, and any personal acquaintance of the inspector is treated by them with the highest consideration. It was thus that my connection with Rascaldom came about; but the introduction once effected, I afterwards contrived to make a few friends among the more eminent villains, upon my own account. Of course, there is a good deal to be said to their disadvantage; but one argument, at least, that is frequently used against one's choice of a friend is inapplicable in their case; they are not poor; they have each a professional income of at least five hundred pounds a year, and never dream of borrowing money of me. If they really wanted it, they would pick my pocket. At times, it is true, they are very hard up indeed; but at such periods I never see them, for they are then compelled to undertake some nefarious enterprise which requires their undivided attention. Their average yearly gains, as I have said, amount to at least five hundred pounds, but this is earned at a loss to the community of about ten times that amount. If they filch a diamond necklace, for instance, they unset the stones; if they steal splendidly carved family plate, they put it into the melting-pot; and even then they dispose of stones and plate at one-fifth of their reduced value to that astute receiver, the Black Doll Man. Moreover, though they have no family ties (to be called such), nor that 'position to keep up' which persons in the learned and other professions find so onerous, they spend their money very recklessly, and to an extent out of all proportion to the enjoyment obtained by it. 'Port,' said Dr Johnson, 'is the liquor for men, but Brandy for heroes;' and my friends, the law-breakers, seem to have taken this remark to heart more than some of his more moral reflections; for brandy is, I observe, the liquor to which the most superior scoundrels addict themselves. The others, including even the ladies, drink gin, and in enormous quantities.

Habits of this sort are calculated to disgust the fastidious; and hence it is that, with the exception of the inspector and similar gentry, who are, after all, on terms of armed neutrality rather than of actual intimacy with them, the Thirty Thousand have scarcely a friend out of their own circle, except myself. The clergy, as I have hinted, know a little about them, but their mutual relations are not cordial; the acquaintance is generally made in gaol, and ceases as soon as the prisoner obtains his liberty, when the chaplain's intercession with the governor becomes no longer of importance. A 'good' chaplain, according to the phraseology of my nefarious friends, is a chaplain that is easily gulled.

And yet do not let it be imagined, however distorted may be their views of life, that these men have lost the meaning of the word 'good.' It is not so easy to blunt the conscience and warp the understanding as some writers on such subjects have imagined. Morals, it is true, are not certainties (except upon the Turf); they may become vague and hazy through disuse, but they still keep some sort of shape; and I very much doubt whether one of my nefarious friends does wrong without knowing it, though he may not feel—when picking a pocket, for instance—the same acute twinge of conscience that would be experienced by—let us say His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury. It is not, I am sure, out of compliment to me that they are constantly excusing themselves for being thieves. They are 'too old' to turn to any other mode of life; the police are so 'hard' against them if they attempt to do so; they have no means of acquiring a livelihood by honest work, never having learned a trade (this is untrue in most cases, because they have been taught one in jail); and, after all, they are no worse than the swells in the City who rob right and left, and never get put in the jug for it. These are the excuses they make, and the last most frequently of all. They point to the great City swindlers, compared with which their own 'plants' and 'swims' are so insignificant, and they say: 'There is one law for the rich, you see, and one for the poor.' I don't deny it; first, because it is true; secondly, because any attempt to impose upon them by misrepresentation would signally fail. I content myself with hearing their views, without attempting to combat them. If I were to tell them the truth—namely, that though there are, without doubt, serious obstacles in the way of their becoming honest men, the chief difficulty lies in their own inherent laziness and love of pleasure—it would produce no good effect, and I should lose the honour of their confidence, and probably their society. 'They are not going to be lectured by any blessed swell in Christendom.' I therefore confine myself to observing them—not, however, let me add, without doing them some little moral or material benefit, when the opportunity offers itself—and to recording the result of my observations. Some persons go as missionaries to the Tonga Islands; others only travel thither to study the Tonga Islanders, and yet they are not censured for so doing. Let my readers, then, be equally charitable to me, who visit for my own amusement or instruction a people infinitely stranger than any to be met with in the remotest places of the earth, and of whom, though they herd so close at hand, Society at large knows absolutely nothing, unless when

one finer specimen than common happens to be caught in the big mesh of the law, and She comes to stare at him, as he stands, very much out of his element, in the dock of the Old Bailey. She is no more in a position to judge of his habits and *habitat*, from such an exceptional view of him, than of those of a fish on a shop-slab; she cannot guess, and does not trouble herself to inquire, how the carp live *under the mud*. I have been there, and seen them loll and lie on the soft ooze, not to be aroused from their swinish lethargy to action save by the sharp necessity for prolonging their own existence. 'Happy fountains,' says a wit on the art-waterfalls, 'for when they work they only play;' unhappy criminal population, for when they work, urged by the sharp spur of hunger, it is only to deprive other men of the fruits of their labour.

It is summer, and Mr James Bradshaw—as he happens just now to call himself, for gentry of his class have as many aliases as the Serene Transparencies have Christian names—is sitting in his shirt sleeves at an open window of the *Bird and Baby*, which commands a view of the Thames. A bull-pup lies at his feet, whose bunged-up eyes would induce a superficial observer to imagine him to be in a state of repose; and on the table by his side is a go of brandy in a pewter potting. If it were desirable to perpetuate, for the advantage of posterity, by canvas, or gold, or gem, a type of the London rascal in his hours of ease, it is thus he should be depicted. The dog may vary (it is sometimes a wiry terrier), but the pewter potting is always at his right hand; and between his teeth, or in his long thin fingers, is a black pipe. Mr Bradshaw's hand is dirty, but delicate, for it has never done a stroke of honest work. Its sense of touch is very acute; its motions are rapid, and when he speaks with energy, he accompanies his words with action. But he seldom does speak with energy: his tone is that of an aristocrat, undemonstrative and reserved; his manners have 'that repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere;' and but for his eyes, you would think him a stupid fellow. Even his eyes are half shut, like those of his dog, but he is no more asleep than is that faithful companion, or a weasel. Even now, though at ease in his inn, and, to all appearance, without a trouble in the world, they will shoot forth a glance of suspicion and anxiety at any unexpected sound—a closing of a door, or a sudden hail from a passing boat, at which the bull-pup also wakes up, shews its gleaming teeth, and growls. Black Care sits behind him on his tilted-up chair, overshadowing the sunny Present. He is 'wanted' by the police, and if once compelled to accept their pressing invitation, he will be 'away from home' for a considerable time. To be 'away from home' is displeasing to every man of domestic habits, but, in my companion's case (for I am sitting with him, drinking shandy-gaff, a mixture of beer and ginger-beer, which he regards with pity), it has a peculiar signification—it means to be in gaol. *What for?* I have not the least idea what for, and I am much too discreet to make inquiry. All I know is, that Mr Bradshaw is in an unusually prosperous condition, from which I infer that somebody must have suffered heavily. For divers reasons, I never ask questions about any recent 'transaction;' but upon past events, which have been condoned (by imprisonment or penal servitude), or forgotten in

the lapse of years, I take the liberty of being inquisitive, and generally find him most frank and communicative. He is exceptionally so to-day: 'full of anecdote,' we should call him, if he was any old fogey at the club, instead of being an ancient marauder steeped in crimes (though not, as I believe, in crimes of violence), and who has been but once inside of a club in his life—on that famous occasion when the *Megatherium* lost all its table-service, and had not a silver spoon next day to lay the table with for its house dinner.

'Do we ever make restitution?' said he good-naturedly, repeating an interrogation which I had just addressed to him. 'Well, yes; we have done such a thing. When we can make no use of an article ourselves, and it is of value to the late possessor, we sometimes send it back again; but it is a risky thing to do, and seldom appreciated. It was only the other day that my friend Sam Plug—I've got the letter somewhere that he and I concocted together; ah! here's the rough copy—well, Sam had made a clean sweep at a swell dentist's near Berkeley Square, where they put the teeth in the window, all covered with gold fittings. There was one lot—a double one—as was just a-going to a countess as had been asked out to dine with the Queen herself (so we heard afterwards), and was worth hundreds of pounds; and Sam spoiled her dinner for her, I reckon, though he did his best to make amends. The poor dentist was in despair, and issued a little hand-bill, begging, in quite a piteous manner, to have the teeth back, provided we had quite done with them. He offered neither threats nor reward, but appealed to our gentlemanly feelings, you see, and that "fetched" us so, that we sent him the grinders back again, with this here letter:

DEAR SIR—You will receive these here grinders what you lost, as they seem to be of great service to you, and my grinders is good enough for all the wittels I gets; and to sell them for a trifle would be a pity, though I wants a trifle bad enough, and no mistake. Please excuse my taking the gould of.—Yours, dear Sir,

SAM'L PLUG.

P.S.—Whoever brings you the grinders home, act like a gentleman to him, as he is a stranger to the party.'

'And did he?' asked I of Mr Bradshaw.

'He did, sir. He gave the bearer a sovereign for himself; and he sent that there letter of ours to the newspapers, and it was printed.' Here Mr Bradshaw cocked his hat on one side (for he always wears his hat within doors, like a Member of the House of Commons), and his modest features were overspread by a look of triumph. He seemed to feel that he was a public man and a literary character.

'That was very satisfactory,' observed I at the close of his narration. 'How is this sort of conduct reciprocated? Do the honest folks—I mean'—

'Do the other parties tumble to it?' insinuated Mr Bradshaw, perceiving my embarrassment. 'Well, yes, sir, I am bound to say they do. We find them sometimes liberal enough, and not disposed to be hard upon us; especially,' added he drily, 'where they find they can get back their goods without the trouble of a prosecution.'

'The police are always rather hard upon you, I'm afraid,' said I, with a sympathising air.

'Well, yes, unless they're squared: though I

did know a magistrate of Bow Street once—name of Minshull—who behaved like a trump to one of our poor people. Not that she was a regular hand, wasn't Mary Smith, but she had been "run in" for pitching into a peeler, and *that's* a crime in the eyes of a beak, let me tell you, as comes somewhere between murder and arson. Mary had been a widow but three weeks, and had two little children locked up at home entirely depending upon her for subsistence: she said so when she was took up, but Heaven bless you! what do peelers care. They turned her into the courtyard behind the office, and there left her. Now, the wall that runs round that yard—or did run at the time I speak of—was not less than twenty feet high, to my personal knowledge. Yet, somehow or other, by placing the bench, as the prisoners sit on, end on against that wall, Mary contrived to reach the top, and so on to the roof of a house. There was no getting into the house, however, and there she would have been caught, but for a piece of pluck as you would not easily have given a young woman credit for. There was an open window in the house *opposite*, and right into that she jumped across the street: a very narrow street it was, of course; but when the gaoler who was in pursuit of her got to the same place, it staggered him: you see he had not got a baby and another child at home as seemed to beckon him over, like; but he was a good plucked one too, and jumped, and— Well, he missed it.'

'And was he killed?' inquired I.

'No, not he,' returned Mr Bradshaw disdainfully: 'he hung to the window-sill by his hands, and Mary helped him up, though there's many a one in her place as would have let him drop, and welcome. And when he *was* pulled up, why, of course, he collared her. Then she was took back to Bow Street; and Mr Minshull, the beak, he visited her in the cell, and told her she was a good soul, but mustn't go about interfering with the police in the execution of their duty; and then he let her go. Here's a good health to him—or leastways to his memory, for he's dead and gone these twenty years, and Mary too. That was the strangest thing—considering as it was good done by a beak, *that's* where it is—as ever I heard on, except Sam's father's will.'

'Was that the father of Mr Plug?' inquired I.

'The same, sir. The old man came to grief through his love of horse-flesh: not as he *eat* it, as some people do in these days, I hear, as ought to know better; but when he saw a horse in a field or on a common, with nobody to take care of it, poor thing, he could never resist taking possession of it. I suppose he must ha' stole a hundred horses. Sam only talks of his horse-stealing, but my belief is that his governor took anything he could lay his hand upon; and unhappily he lived in the old times, when folks got scragged for picking up ever so small a trifle above the value of forty shillings. Well, he was scragged accordingly, and the night before he was turned off, he made his will.'

'He couldn't have very much to leave, you'll say; but this is what he left among his five sons—the five fingers of his right hand. Perhaps it was to blind the chaplain—though it was rather late to try that on—but what he wrote down was: "I leave one finger of my right hand to each of my five children, as a warning against the crime of thieving, which has brought me to this pass." Sam,

being the youngest, got the thumb, and kept it in spirits ever so long, though, for my part, I always thought it a waste of good gin. That was the queerest thing as ever I came across—the very queerest.’

‘Then the warning didn’t do Mr Samuel any good; he didn’t act by rule of thumb?’

‘Not a bit, sir. It did him harm, for it got him a bad name among those who knew he carried such a thing about with him, and I think it brought him ill luck. He never did a good stroke of business after he had that legacy.’

‘What do you call a good stroke of business, Mr Bradshaw? I should like to hear the best that you ever did.’

‘Well, the very best thing as ever I did in my whole life—the very best’ (he corrects his former orthography in this dexterous manner out of deference to me) ‘was that double event as I pulled off down at the Bank.’

‘The Bank of England?’ I inquire, as he looks into the pewter measure, which I have just caused to be refilled, and refreshes himself.

‘Ay, the Bank of England. What a place it is! What a world of flimsies passes every day across its counter! What a mint of money lies in its cellars! Have you ever been into the Bank cellars, sir?’

I nod an affirmative.

‘Dear heart alive! I wish I could get an order just to see ‘em.’

‘I wish you could,’ I reply; not that I really do wish it, but if ‘there is no harm in wishing,’ there can be still less in pretending to wish, and also I desire to make it distinctly clear that it is out of my power to afford Mr Bradshaw the opportunity in question.

‘How very, very seldom it is,’ continues my companion pathetically, ‘that a cove ever gets a chance with the Bank. Fauntleroy did it; but then he was a swell like yourself.’ [I deprecate this compliment with a wave of my hand, but he proceeds.] ‘Some people are born with silver spoons in their mouths, others with wooden ladles; that’s where it is. The Old Lady in Threadneedle Street can always take care of herself: if a note is stolen, she don’t suffer; while, if it is lost, it is just so much in her own pocket, unless you can get a justice of the peace to swear it’s burned. You must be a justice, you see, before you can be believed in this world; that’s where it is. However, there are other banks beside the Old Lady’s, and it was with one of them that I pulled off my double event. We don’t have no check-books, you know, we poor fellows (it is my belief that none of us ever have had, except Jem the Penman, of whom of course you have heard); and it is not often as we are found in banks. There are too many peelers about such places, and everybody keeps such an uncommon sharp look-out, that it’s next to impossible to do business. However, I did happen on one occasion to step into the Threadneedle establishment to change a five-pound note. It wasn’t often that I had such a thing, and perhaps I was a bit proud of it, especially, too, as it had been come by on the square. The peelers had nothing against me just then; and there I was a-listening to the jingle of the gold and the flutter of the flimsies, without a thought beyond how very nice it was; though it made my mouth water like the sight of a peach on a hot day. Well, I wasn’t in a hurry to change my note, because, when I had done that, I should

have no excuse for stopping in that delightful place, and I knew it was very unlikely that I should have a similar pretext for visiting it again for some time; so I watched the folks going in and out, and wondered to see them so very careful in pulling out and stowing away their money, just as though other people were not as honest as themselves—when all of a sudden I sees a greenhorn. A young man, evidently a banker’s clerk by his little padlocked bag, but one who was as innocent of the ways of the place as I myself, to judge by the way he stared about him and asked questions of the beadle. How he came to be trusted on such an errand, is a marvel to me, but there he was, waiting his turn to be served at the counter, with his little bag standing by his side, as though it could take care of itself, and his eyes wandering all over the place and settling everywhere except on me. Perhaps he thought that his money was safe in the bag because the bag was locked.’

‘*Quis custodiet ipsos custodes,*’ said I, irrepressibly compelled to quotation.

‘That’s where it is, sir,’ returned my imperturbable friend, ‘or, rather, that’s where it *was*, for the next instant I had whipped up the bag, and dropped it into my shooting-jacket pocket, and was staring as intently at the skylight and the various other objects of interest as the young fellow had been himself. Then I strolled out rather quickish, just in time to hear the door shut behind me, and a great stir and tumult following me from the room, just as though everybody was taxing everybody else with having possessed himself of a flat black bag with a brass padlock full of something particular. I passed by the porter at the gate with a quick step and a beating heart—he ought to have been minding his business, instead of talking to a policeman, and thereby frightening a poor cove with sensitive nerves like me—and at once sought the sanctuary of a four-wheeled cab, to think over matters a little quite cool and calm. There might be ten thousand pounds in that little black bag, and it also might be empty, or only contain securities.’

‘Ratsbane,’ said I, with a smile, thinking of Falstaff.

‘That’s where it is, sir,’ continued Mr Bradshaw. ‘At that time I was but a young fellow, and didn’t know what was good for me. Give me money, said I to myself, or give me notes, but darn your securities. I used to burn ‘em (drat ‘em) whenever they came my way, just because I didn’t know what to do with ‘em. Well, when I got home (which I didn’t do in that cab, you may take your oath), I ran up-stairs, and locked myself into my room, like a young lady agoing to look at her first love-letter. Love-letters are all very well in their way, and registered letters are better still; but give me—for something to make your heart go pit-a-pat—a little black bag as you have just snapped up at the Bank of England, and don’t know what’s inside it. Well, inside *this* were five hundred pounds in Bank of England notes, and a parcel of securities worth ten times as much again. I was in two minds to burn those last, but fortunately I thought better of it, and determined to wait and see what would come of it.’

‘Did you have no stings of conscience with regard to the poor young man, whose prospects were probably blighted for ever by your conduct?’ inquired I.

The question was imprudent, as savouring of the character of morality; but Mr Bradshaw's equanimity was not disturbed by it.

'Well, at all events, the stings were not so very severe,' said he with a grin, 'but that the blue bag—or rather the black one—was a remedy for them. And as to that, why, if one party had to suffer for it, there was half-a-dozen other parties as were positively benefited by what I'd done.'

'In fact, Mr Bradshaw,' said I, smiling, 'you would have gained the approbation of Dr Paley for consulting the greatest happiness of the greatest number.'

'That's just where it is, sir. The third edition of the evening paper, for instance, was benefited by having that *Gigantic Robbery at the Bank of England* to talk about; and that respectable body of men, the peelers—we should always do good to our enemies, says the chaplain—were benefited by being set upon the track of the audacious miscreant, with the prospect of a great recompense if they caught him. As time went on, the benefits became even more general; for printers and bill-stickers were employed in informing the public that five hundred pounds reward would be given for the recovery of the securities, and that, the numbers of the stolen notes being known, they were stopped at the Bank. So there I was, after having made so many people happy, without a shilling to repay me for all my trouble, let alone the risk.'

'But now came round the day when I found the wisdom of not putting things behind the fire; for the banker, who had had the imprudence to employ so young a clerk, got the screw put on him by the owners of the securities, and, beginning to despair of the "vigilance" of those "experienced detectives of the A division" doing him much good, looked about him for other means to gain his ends. Rich gentlemen in the City of course never dream of doing anything wrong, such as compounding a felony; but, somehow or other, when they can't get back their own by fair means (as they term by force), we generally find them open to reason. It would be a breach of confidence to tell you how it was arranged, but, after some haggling, it was arranged that, on the understanding that I gave up the securities, I was to bone the reward which the detectives had missed. I took them, therefore, one evening to Mr Bullion's house of business with my own hands, and gave them into those of his confidential clerk, who as honourably performed his part of the bargain.'

'But here are the notes,' said I, producing them; 'you have not said a word about them. I think you should give me something extra for their restoration.'

'Not one shilling,' said the chief clerk, taking them quietly out of my possession, and comparing their numbers with a list before him. 'They were of no use to anybody, as you well knew; so we thank you for nothing. However, I am glad you have brought them, as the Bank dislike to be put to the inconvenience of stopping their notes; and I will write to-night to advise them that the embargo may be withdrawn.'

'I think I deserve something,' I began again; but he cut me short with telling me that I deserved the gallows, and turned me out of doors with his own hands. Then I watched and waited till I saw my gentleman come out and drop a letter into the

post-office across the way; and then I made up my mind to go in for the Double Event, though I shook in my shoes as I thought of the risk of it. When the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street opened her doors next morning, I was the first to cross the threshold, dressed as tidy and quiet as you please, and carrying the very same black bag which had made such a noise in the world. You would have said I was a nice young clerk as lived with his aunt at Clapham, and was very popular at tea-parties. 'Here are these stolen notes,' says I, as bold as brass, 'about which you were advised by Bullion & Co. last night. Please to give me gold for them.' When the old gentleman as sat at the counter turned his spectacles upon me in reply to those words, I felt as if his eyes were burning-glasses, and my face was tinder. 'It is all right,' said I, 'is it not? Mr Shovelboard' [that was the head clerk at Bullion's] 'instructed me to that effect.'

'It is all right,' returned the old gentleman, looking carefully through the notes, and counting out the money. 'Give Mr Shovelboard my compliments, and say that we are obliged to him.'

'But I thought you said you had restored the notes to Bullion's Bank, Mr Bradshaw?'

'Well, no, not *exactly* the notes; though something very like them. The fact is, I had occupied my leisure during the time which had elapsed since my first little adventure with *imitating* the notes. I gave up the securities, like a man of honour, without any attempt to imitate them; but the notes were not in the bargain.'

'You got the five hundred pounds reward, then, and the five hundred pounds in change for the notes as well?' said I, with unconcealed admiration.

'That was where it was, sir,' replied Mr Bradshaw modestly: 'I pulled off the Double Event.'

SANITARY REFORM.

If the progress of the well-being of the people and the benefits of an advanced civilisation on the masses are to be appreciated by something palpable, we may well turn to the application of the principles of health; a science which, though old as humanity, has only attained a certain position very recently. The legislators of the Jews, of Greece, and of Rome, guessing its importance, only gave a solid basis to sanitary prescriptions by uniting them closely to religious belief. The monks and hermits of the middle ages unfortunately took up a different idea, and recommended, in theory and practice, the utter contempt of all attention to personal cleanliness, considering it to be a mark of vanity. The noble public baths of the Romans fell into decay and disuse; for neglect of the body suited the idle habits of the uneducated. In the present day, the observation of measures of salubrity is an act of personal convenience or a public duty according to the interest which is felt in it. That which affects the individual is left to each person's free-will, and the state only intervenes in grave circumstances; but everywhere a strong feeling is growing up that the general health is one of the most important cares of a government. The tendency of men to collect for their exclusive profit in large cities, and the immense development of trade, have aggravated the causes of infection, and created the duty of protecting the population against the multifold

causes of insalubrity. Legislation is becoming more and more severe in framing repressive or preventive laws; refinement of manners, which cannot endure the sight or odour of objectionable objects; medical study, which teaches us that the forgetfulness of hygienic precautions is the cause of much disease; and the advancement in chemistry, which has discovered how to turn to profit the residuum from many trades hitherto thrown away as useless, and producing noxious results—all lead in the right direction. When surgeons have proved by statistics that the cholera fastens by preference on the damp, dirty quarters of large towns, corporations take courage to purify and widen the streets and courts where the poorer classes live, even at a very large expenditure.

It is not necessary to go very far to discover the necessity for all this, even in the present day; but what must have been the state of our towns a century ago, when the streets were an infectious charnel-house full of stagnant water and heaps of dirt? Every nation reveals, by the state of its roads, the real rank which it holds in civilisation; we find the lowest class among the independent and wandering tribes who have no settled government. The South Sea Islanders allow the refuse of daily life to be heaped round their provisional encampment, with the utmost disregard of decency and comfort; the Arabs, more advanced in other respects, are not more careful; and the collection of pilgrims which is yearly formed around Mecca has been noted as one of the first causes of cholera, which spreads from thence as a destroying angel over all the countries of the world. Sanitary measures, even in our more civilised nations, do not date very far back. The middle ages had their leper-houses, open to individuals attacked by the contagious maladies, which the great movement of the Crusades spread over Europe; but these institutions offered no preventive check. It was only in the latter part of the seventeenth century that the surgeons turned their attention to the subject; from that time the question gradually enlarged until the beginning of the present century, when public hygiene attained an importance in all large towns.

It is notorious that certain employments condemn the workers in them to a precocious death, but it is not always known how much those suffer who live in the neighbourhood of unwholesome manufactories. The fabrication of a most important drug, for instance, that of quinine, inflicts a special malady on those who make it, and also on the inhabitants round about, who never enter the works. Wells are a too frequent source of illness, owing to impure filtrations: a family was poisoned a few years ago owing to drinking water which had previously been pure; chemical analysis discovered in it a certain quantity of arsenic, which came from a manufactory at a considerable distance. Who is not aware of the unhealthy odour which certain trades spread over a large surface; of the mephitic gas which rises from stagnant water and uncleansed drains; or the clouds of smoke ascending into the darkened atmosphere only to fall back upon the earth in soot? The subject is not a pleasant one, but it is one that should be probed to the core, and we should rather imitate the ancient Romans, who intrusted the care of these matters to one of their highest citizens, as a mark of honour, than indulge in any effeminate repugnance.

Air, earth, and water may be said to be the vehicles of industrial infection, though they do not influence animal life in the same degree or the same manner. Tossed about by the winds of heaven, the atmosphere in a certain way purifies itself; the putrid germs are dispersed to the four corners of the horizon, so that the evil does not continue after the cause of it has disappeared; since, sooner or later, the solid particles fall to the ground by reason of their weight as dust. Water can also renew itself by filtration through the rough earth and stones of its bed; if this be of sand or gravel, it loses all that spoils its flavour and colour, or diminishes its clearness. The only things that escape this universal law of spontaneous purification are stagnant water and confined air. The earth is the last receptacle for these injurious matters, and there they submit to an elaboration by which they again become inoffensive, either transformed by allying themselves to oxygen, or by assimilating with plants, of which they are a constituent element. There are three ways of purifying the soil: by burning these organic débris rapidly; by allowing them slowly to consume in the open air, abandoned to the mysterious process of nature; or by restoring them to the vegetable kingdom, which they feed. The first is barbarous, since it destroys what is valuable, and is generally too costly; the second is so tardy that it is not efficacious: whilst the last resolves the problem of disinfection, and, what is not to be despised, it resolves itself into a profit to man himself, by giving a safe employment for dangerous and inconvenient matters.

If we turn back to the unhealthy state of the air in factories and workshops, it may be observed that the workmen of all countries shew such a carelessness about their health that the best reforms often fail through the want of their co-operation. In some trades where poisonous substances are used, the masters have tried to enforce the wearing of gloves or the frequent washing of the hands; yet the men have refused to conform to such simple injunctions. At a manufactory in the neighbourhood of Newcastle, the workmen threatened to leave because they were desired to take baths at certain intervals. But nevertheless great improvements have taken place in the last fifty years—white-lead, which is one of the most dangerous compounds of oil-paint, has been rendered almost innocuous; and the largest manufacturers can now boast that years will pass without any of their men being attacked by colic; which is chiefly due to strict attention to the laws of cleanliness. The making of matches requires many dangerous operations, such as dipping the bunches into inflammable paste, and placing them when finished in boxes. In the first of these, the maker constantly breathes phosphoric vapour, and in the second, which is chiefly performed by women, spontaneous combustion frequently occurs, causing serious wounds on the hands. These have both been remedied by using machines instead of the hands, and a still greater benefit has arisen by a different preparation of phosphorus being employed.

The Sheffield cutlers have suffered severely from the sharpening of steel knives and needles; the fine dust entering the mouth and nostrils, and the constant stooping over the grindstone deforming the chest. The preparation of skins and leather places the currier in an unwholesome atmosphere;

and the cotton-mills of Lancashire have a bad reputation. Ventilation is the principal remedy against these maladies.

As for the long trail of smoke which our large factories emit from their chimneys, much has already been done to lessen it, though there is still great reason for improvement. At one time, it was suggested that if they were built to an immense height, the smoke would cease to be noxious, and Glasgow points with pride to some of these columns, higher than any building in the world excepting the spire of Strasburg Cathedral, and the largest pyramid of Egypt. But this was a very imperfect proceeding. There was nothing in the air to neutralise these emanations, and though the particles fell at a greater distance, attenuated, it is true, they were just as mischievous. Coal-smoke is very disagreeable, but other gases from chemical works act as a mortal poison on vegetation. Such are the nitrous and sulphuric vapours from the manufactories of these acids; whilst the smelting of iron ore renders a country sterile for miles round. One of the most curious effects of this kind is to be found in the smoke of lime-kilns on the vineyards of France; it gives the grapes and wine for some distance round a disagreeable taste; and in Burgundy, the kilns are always interrupted in their work from the time of the flowering of the vines to the season of ingathering. In the previous cases, condensation of the injurious vapours before leaving the chimney, has been found eminently serviceable.

It is not the atmosphere alone that has been rendered impure by the residuum of industrial establishments, but our rivers have suffered from this detestable influence to a fearful degree. The streams which flow through Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, and Sheffield; and those of Ghent, Mons, and Verviers in Belgium, present a sad spectacle of putrescent matter, where fish can no longer find a home. Legislation has actively interfered in this respect, and a soda-manufactory on one of our shores has no resource left but to ship its useless refuse daily, and carry it two miles' distance into the sea. Some dye-works at Lyon, where exquisite colours are extracted from coal-tar, is obliged to put the residue into barrels, and send it down to Marseille, where it is emptied into the Mediterranean. At Ghent, the waters of the Lys were so fetid that whole quarters of the town became uninhabitable, and the course of the river was turned away by a bar into a new channel. Dye-works are especially injurious, as the water becomes a dark colour, and is often full of poison. In the northern part of France, where there was no possibility of safely disposing of the noxious material, the manufacturers were obliged to allow their residuary liquid to lie in immense basins, where, mixed with various chemical appliances, the water cleared itself, and afforded an un hoped-for result. What settled in the tanks, submitted to new operations, restored in a useful form the matters which had hitherto been a pure loss; a new confirmation of the general law that chemical experiments are only perfect when they leave no useless residue. All sanitary progress will in the end resolve itself into progress in economy.

The steeping of flax and hemp in some countries is a most fruitful source of illness; the cattle even suffer from it. Instead of frequently renewing the water of the pools where the textile fabric is

disunited, the peasants allow it to putrefy for an indefinite time, persuaded that the work goes on better and more quickly in stagnant water. Hence the fevers which ravage the neighbourhood. Many methods have been proposed to render the operation less unhealthy, and to diminish the time required; unfortunately, these chemical experiments, though more rapid, have the effect of taking away the strength of the fibre; and custom, so powerful in the minds of country people, will long oppose a strong resistance to salutary innovations.

At the Social Science meeting recently held in Leeds, which it was the writer's privilege to attend, this difficulty of inducing the working men to live according to the principles of sanitary science, was one of the chief regrets of the various speakers. Dr Acland, who read a very interesting paper on Homes in the Country, was obliged to confess that in one instance, where the landlord had generously built model cottages, he found that the tenants, instead of using the proper number of bedrooms, were huddled together into one room, as in former years, and used the others for the storing of apples and potatoes. A general opinion was expressed that state interference was of little value in these matters, but that if every intelligent person in large and small towns would take a certain number of cottages for weekly visitation, and try to induce the people to open their bedroom windows at the top, and teach other ordinary means for preserving health, the education of the people would be advanced. A Scotch gentleman said: 'Let the clean bodies go among the dirty bodies, and an improvement will in time be seen;' reminding those present of an admirable book, which, though sixty years old, was as true now as then, the *Cottagers of Glenburnie*, where the excellent Mrs Mason worked her way in a Scottish home for the advancement of the inmates. Glasgow was especially selected by several speakers as one of the most hopeless cases of home-misery, owing to the extreme indifference of the Celtic population. The Improvement Commissioners had spent thousands in destroying houses unfit for habitation, so as to force the people into the more healthy suburbs, and yet they rendered good homes miserable by their habits, and their children were brought up in the same debasement.

Mr Daglish of Newcastle could happily bring forward the case of a society in that town for the improvement of dwellings which has proved a success. At Jarrow, too, a number of working men had united to build their own cottages; money was borrowed on much the same principle as that of building societies, but without any profit; five per cent. being paid for it, and the same for amortisement. The dwelling became the property of the builder in fourteen years. Between four and five hundred had thus been erected. As for the difficult question of ventilation, much abuse was poured upon architects in general, whom one speaker proposed to hang up like bundles along the streets, as a warning to others to build decent houses. Another had laid out a plan of ventilation for himself, which his architect declined to have anything to do with; he did it at his own risk, and it has answered admirably. At the side of the chimney, an air-shaft was built communicating with it; this was connected with an open cornice, into which were inserted tile-drains of three or four inches diameter, at intervals of three feet: the

impure air escaped through these into the chimney, and there was no draught. Mr Rawlinson, the experienced civil engineer, recommended that every house should be isolated from the subsoil by a layer of concrete, with a course of slates within the walls, to prevent the damp rising. If there was a basement story, an extra wall should be built round, to prevent the earth coming in contact with the walls. A simple and efficient plan of ventilation, where no other was in use, was to open the top of the staircase window about three inches, and screw it down, so that it could never be shut night or day: if the outside air were let in, Nature would do the rest—she would oxidise and purify.

Whilst the houses of the poor and middle classes were found to be so faulty, it appeared that even money could not always secure the best results; for in Windsor Castle, where £750,000 had been spent by George IV. and William IV., it was found to be so unpleasant, as to be almost uninhabitable when our present Queen came to the throne. Upon examination, no less than fifty overflowing cess-pools were discovered beneath the castle, and not a single window was sashed at the top; years were required to remedy the evils, but now it is one of the healthiest homes in England.

Some very pretty drawings of cottages were exhibited by Mr Habershon, from the Central Cottage Improvement Society of London. As they are built of concrete, which is made on the spot in large blocks, the expense of carting bricks is saved, and what would cost twelve pounds in the latter case can be done for eight pounds in concrete. The walls are hollow, so that ventilation is easily effected, and the rooms are never over-heated in summer; there is also no necessity for interior plastering. The cost of a single cottage is about one hundred pounds; and a pair, each containing three bedrooms, can be had for two hundred or two hundred and thirty pounds.

It appears very requisite that some effort should be made for improving the condition of the working-classes, since a paper of Dr Rumsey's clearly pointed out that there was a decided degeneracy of race in large towns. Broad chests and powerful limbs are no longer common among artisans, and there is yearly an increase of men rejected by the medical examiners of recruits, owing to bodily unfitness. Food being much higher in price, the poor can scarcely indulge in meat. The absence of milk in children's diet was a main cause of constitutional debility. The poor little creatures are fed on adulterated tea of the lowest price, sweetened with sugar full of acari. The overcrowding of rooms, and the want of fresh air, formed bloodless, slender, and distorted children; whilst the misery of house accommodation no doubt led to much of the drunkenness which so widely prevailed among the parents.

As for the question of promoting health in workshops and factories, it was suggested by Dr Stallard, that we should attempt to employ our people in the open air: it was that, more than food, which made the countryman healthier than the townsman. To protect persons from draughts and rain was all that was necessary. To this end, a number of small openings in the ceiling were required. Every room should be supplied with a double ceiling, the space between being in free communication with the air outside by means of perforated bricks, and sufficient space allowed to

sweep out this air-chamber. The upper ceiling would either be the floor of the room above, or the roof itself, whilst the lower one was made of finely perforated zinc, or oiled paper. No great volume of air could come down through this, and the impure products would rise and escape through the apertures; neither would the warming of the room be interfered with. The operatives could in this way enjoy the comfort of working in the open air.

The limits of this paper will not admit of any discussion on the vexed question of the sewerage of large towns. The favourers of the irrigation system, and the ABC system, had each their warm advocates; and the latter having met with the sanction of the corporation of Leeds, has its works in a forward state of advancement. Notwithstanding that similar works at Leamington are selling their native guano to any amount at three pounds a ton, the chemists at this meeting assured the farmers that it would prove worthless; and, on the other side, the irrigation system was said to poison all the neighbourhood. Time will decide the difficulty; and let us hope that these various efforts will not remain sterile, but that public opinion will aid the municipalities in their endeavour to give to both town and country pure air, water, and light. It is a great work, the accomplishment of which has reference to the material well-being; for the man whose feet are no longer plunged in mud, and whose lungs do not breathe a vitiated and impure atmosphere, is better disposed to accept the higher teaching by which men strive, not without success, to combat moral infection.

CECIL'S TRYST.

CHAPTER XXXVI.—COMING HOME.

WHEN I had bidden adieu to my poor friend for ever, and retired at last to my own chamber, it was not to sleep, but to think upon his fate, and to pass in review again and again the strange events that had succeeded it. My wife was as wakeful as myself, and full of the same thoughts, which she pursued with far more skill than I. Blame she had no cause to feel, as I had; nor was her sorrow, though great, so violent as to quench, as it were, with tears (as it did in my case) the fire of her indignation against Jane; or perhaps, as Minna had said, woman's wit is keener than man's to observe the actions and guess the motives of those of her own sex. She astounded me by declaring that an actual suspicion of the truth respecting Jane had flashed upon her on the night when I read the letter which announced (the supposed) Cecil's intention of never seeing us more. It was so like a woman's letter, she said, from first to last. It was true she had dismissed the idea from her mind, next moment, as too monstrous to be entertained; but it had recurred again, in spite of herself, when Mr Clote called with his news, and had certainly induced her to tear up the deed of gift—an act which I had myself thought out of keeping with Nelly's nature, which was quiet and undemonstrative, though firm and resolute. A

hundred incidents occurred to us now, any one of which would have strengthened suspicion, had we once entertained it; but, of course (with the exception of those momentary instincts on Nelly's part, which I have just mentioned), we had entertained none.

Cecil's—that is, the supposed Cecil's—forgetfulness of all that happened in the old Gatcombe days, except in so far as his sister had been mixed up with them; and in particular, his total obliviousness of the plays that we had been wont to write, I might almost say together, since much of them had been contributed by his own pen; his excusing himself from playing the flute—which, in reality, he could not play at all, but only the real Cecil—and, on the other hand, the improvement which we had all noticed in his touch on the piano. How easy it was now to explain his disinclination for going into society, since the more eyes were fixed upon him, the greater chance, of course, he ran of discovery; and especially his determined objection to meet Ruth. He had feared her eyes beyond all others, and would without doubt never have attended the performance of the *Foot-page* had he dreamed that she and Miss Brabant were the same person. More than all, and which ought to have excited in us something more than mere surprise, was that astounding circumstance of his not recognising Ruth even when brought face to face with her. How feeble now appeared those arguments by which I had endeavoured to explain this fact away both to myself and others; and how sagacious had Lady Repton shewn herself in attaching such extreme importance to the occurrence: no wonder that my masquerading cousin had dreaded her sharp looks, and striven to propitiate her by all means in her power!

'You don't think, by-the-bye,' said I, 'that her Ladyship herself had any suspicion of the truth, do you, Nelly?'

'No,' returned my wife slowly, 'I do not think she had; and yet, I believe, she was always on the very verge of discovering it. "I can't understand this change in your cousin Cecil," she would say, half-a-dozen times a day. "He is not himself at all, and he has certainly not altered for the better." But then, again, she was always ready to allow that his friendship for yourself was as warm and loyal as ever. In fact, Fred., your cousin Jane would not have been able to carry on the imposition for a day, if she had not been in love with you, which enabled her with ease to simulate friendship, and still keep a residue of tenderness.'

'Poor Jane!' sighed I.
'It will be time enough to pity her when she has owned her crime,' observed my wife dryly.

Here there was a little pause.

'Aunt Ben had no suspicion of the matter, Nelly, think you?'

'None whatever. No one had any, to be called such.'

'One person, however,' said I, 'has known the fact for these two months. Ruth, of course, discovered it on the day of their interview.'

'She discovered it before, Fred. She knew it on the previous night, when we were at the theatre. I well recollect now that I saw Miss Brabant's face peering through the curtain, when you were acknowledging the plaudits of the audience, with a pained puzzled look upon it that I could not understand; it struck me as so strange—for I had forgotten the relation between them, and indeed everything else but your triumph—that she should be looking at your cousin, and not at you; and then do you remember the message that arrived immediately afterwards, asking you to come behind the scenes? If you had gone alone, this mystery would, I think, have been solved at once; but as Jane accompanied you, Ruth took her own way with her in the matter.'

'And she has kept her own way ever since,' mused I. 'She must certainly have some very powerful reason for silence, since I am sure she would not voluntarily be a party to any fraud on you and me, and above all to benefit Jane.'

To that opinion my wife assented; but her wits could not help mine to any conclusion as to Ruth's motive. One thing, indeed, was tolerably plain, that she had been made, by some means or other, Jane's confidant, and could elucidate matters if she would. And yet I shrank from frankly disclosing the whole affair to Ruth, for fear that she might, after all, be herself deceived; it was very unlikely, but still in a case where so many improbabilities did exist, that also might be. On the other hand, I had no means of communicating with Jane except through her.

The best way of contriving this, of letting my cousin understand that the fraud was discovered, without at the same time disclosing it, should the letter fall into the hands of a third person ignorant of the fraud, occupied our thoughts for hours; but at last I hit upon a plan which at least had simplicity to recommend it, and if approved of by Mr Clote, we decided to act upon it on the morrow. Convinced that we had now done our best in the way both of council and reflection, we contrived, though not until the little household of the inn was already astir, to snatch a little sleep.

The course I proposed to myself, and in which Mr Clote concurred, was, that I should write to Jane at once, but not to Ruth. The note would, of course, pass through the latter's hands; and its Swiss postmark and the *Immediate* upon the cover, would, if she were in possession of the secret, convince her that it was discovered. At all events, it was probable that she would open the note, and finding that all was known, would take such means to inform Jane as might seem most judicious.

On the other hand, if Ruth was herself ignorant of the matter, and mere curiosity compelled her to open the note, it was so worded as not to compromise Jane; and in such a case, the communication would, of course, be forwarded (for it was very certain now that Ruth and my cousin were not under the same roof, and must be left to have its own effect. It ran as follows:

Cousin—for I could not bring myself to write 'Dear Cecil' now, with the protest of that poor dead face so fresh in my recollection—I have tidings for you which must need demand your attention: our lost one was found here in a crevasse of the Aletsch glacier last night, and is to be buried to-morrow. Mr Clote is with us at this place, the Eggischhorn,

which you doubtless remember so vividly, and the identification of the body is established beyond doubt; but it will not be made public, unless you choose it to be so. The newspapers will doubtless speak of it as that of 'an unknown tourist,' and so far as we are concerned, believe me, we should prefer it to be always so described. We shall be at home when this letter reaches you; so direct thither to your kinsman,

FREDERICK WRAY.

The nails were being driven into my dear Cecil's coffin as I wrote this letter; and when I addressed it to 'Cecil Wray,' I felt as sharp a pain as though they had been aimed at my own heart; yet, curiously enough, my very love for him made me tender towards the sister he had held so dear, and when that letter had once passed beyond my power to do so, I would have given much to have recalled it.

For was it not but too likely that it might have some immediately fatal effect upon its unhappy recipient? I remembered now with a shudder that almost fatal day at his hotel—I still thought of it as 'his' from habit—when I arrived only just in time to prevent him from committing a new and still more deadly crime than that of which he stood convicted; and how much more reason was there for his committing it *now*! I recalled his look of terror, too great, as it seemed to me, even then, to be ascribed to the propinquity of death, and found the right solution of it. He had not recognised my voice, changed by fear and excitement, when I cried 'Cecil! Cecil!' at the door; and the sound had doubtless struck him as something supernatural—a cry of reproach from yonder icy tomb, or the voice of his own conscience appealing to a dead brother for pardon. The letter on his desk, about which he had been so solicitous as to whether I had read it or not, had doubtless been his confession, made, as he imagined, on the brink of eternity; and was there not far more reason for his crossing that brink *now*—for his escaping 'anywhere, anywhere out of the world' wherein his fraud and falsehood had been exposed—than there had been *then*? To be sure, he had passed his oath to me that he would never again attempt his life, but he had done so with that curious proviso, 'unless I myself should approve his doing so'—suggested, doubtless, in view of possible detection; and might he not now easily convince himself that in my opinion, as in his own, the best thing that he could do in so sad a case was to end shame and life together!

This apprehension troubled me exceedingly, though I strove to keep it to myself, and haunted me more and more with every hour that brought us nearer home. My wife, and even Mr Clote and Minna (who accompanied us), were anxious enough for the contents of that letter which we should doubtless find awaiting us in Merton Square; but, for my part, I scarcely looked for a letter at all, but only for ghastly tidings.

CHAPTER XXXVII.—WHO BRIBED BATTY?

We found Aunt Ben awaiting our return in a most excited state, for we had not liked to intrust to paper what had brought us home so suddenly, but had only written to say we were coming. We, on our part too, had an anxious question to put to her: Was there a letter from Cecil? But she

replied carelessly that there was not, and rallied me about my devotion to my cousin, 'which seemed to make Fred. ignore his poor old aunt and everybody else.'

I am sure the dear, kind soul had no cause to say that, for the sight of her honest, kindly face was welcome to us both—more at that time than ever, for its promise of sympathy in trouble. She listened to the story of our discovery at the Eggischorn with hushed amazement—not that surprise was too great for horror, but that, from the moment she understood what had happened, the mere details ceased to interest her, in comparison with her concern for the unhappy Jane.

'What will she do? What can she do?' ejaculated she. 'Some one should go to her at once.'

In this I quite concurred; and Aunt Ben volunteered to be the ambassador.

'I will go to Miss Brabant the first thing to-morrow morning,' said I, 'and procure the address.'

'By-the-bye, there is a letter for you from Miss Brabant on the drawing-room mantel-piece.'

I had flown down-stairs and seized the letter before Aunt Ben had done explaining to Nelly that she had thought 'it didn't signify, and might wait.' It was but a little note indeed, written on pink paper, and just such a communication, to look at, as might have 'waited' (from my aunt's point of view) any amount of time without damage. But its contents were very pregnant.

Dear Master Fred.—I opened the letter you addressed to Cecil, for which, under the circumstances, I had his authority. After much consideration, I have sent it on this afternoon. Heaven grant I have not done wrong: my mind misgives me. I must see you immediately upon your arrival. Do not lose a moment. If I am at the theatre, come and fetch me.—Yours truly,

RUTH.

It was then ten o'clock at night. I snatched up a newspaper, and looking at the performance-list of the Corinthæum, perceived Miss Brabant advertised for the burlesque as well as for the *Foot-pads*. She would be at the theatre then for another hour; and thither I determined to go, that I might see her the first moment she was at liberty.

For once, even Aunt Ben did not disapprove of my eagerness for an interview with Ruth. 'I have done her wrong, I allow, Fred,' said she; 'at all events, with respect to your cousin.'

Agitated as I was, I could scarcely help laughing at the unnecessary air of candour with which this apology was made. 'It is most creditable to you, Aunt Ben,' said I, 'to confess as much.'

'I am always ready to own myself in the wrong, when I am in the wrong,' returned she gravely. 'But you must admit that the case was most suspicious. We ought to be charitable; but it surely can scarcely be expected of us to credit a gentleman with being a lady.'

The burlesque was drawing to its close as I entered the theatre, but I had hardly patience to await its conclusion. How thin and pointless fell its poor jests upon my ear, as I stood, concealed from the notice of those upon the stage, and watched its tinselled scenes and worthless glitter! The central figure was always the Fairy Queen (Miss Brabant), more beautiful than all the rest, and more unreal. Beneath the paint which she had freely given her cheeks, I thought I could

discern the traces of anxiety and grief; and at times her grand eyes seemed to wander round the house, as though in search of some new-comer; but she played her part to perfection; and when at last the curtain fell, it was amid a tumult of applause. A born actress was Ruth, if ever there was one, for it was certainly not want of feeling that enabled her to throw aside the burden of such a secret as she carried in her breast, and assume so naturally a character that was to real life what a rainbow is to a sunbeam.

I came upon her ere she had reached her dressing-room, and while she was still bedizened in her robes of mimic state. They were rich and costly, however, as though they had belonged to veritable majesty; and I noticed that her fingers were covered with splendid rings.

'You are come at last!' were her first eager words. 'I have been looking for you all the evening.' Then turning to her 'dresser': 'Bring me my cloak and hood, girl.'

'But I can wait,' said I.

'Yes; but I can not,' interrupted she imperiously. 'Every moment, for all that we can tell, is priceless.'

'Do you apprehend, then, that he—that she'

—My voice was tremulous, I know, for I dreaded to hear her corroborate my fears by her own.

'I apprehend the worst,' answered she gravely. The cloak and hood were brought, and rapidly adjusted, yet with such skill that they quenched the glories of her stage attire as completely as an extinguisher on flame.

A brougham was in waiting at the stage door, which carried us quickly to Laburnum Villa.

'Don't talk to me upon the way,' said she; 'let me collect my thoughts, for I have much to tell you.'

Fantine opened the door to us without betraying a scintillation of astonishment. She had the faculty of not being surprised at any event; or, if she did possess the curiosity peculiar to her sex, she had the resolution of a North American Indian not to betray it. She lighted the chandelier in the little drawing-room, relieved her mistress of her cloak, and left us together, at midnight—Ruth a dazzling butterfly, and I a grub, travel-worn and travel-stained (for I had had no time even to change my clothes)—as unconcerned as though I were making a morning call.

'I knew this interview must come to pass some day, Master Fred,' began Ruth slowly, and speaking with painful effort; 'I have been expecting it, looking forward to it with dread, for months, that appear years. It is hard for you, but it is far worse for me, as you will hear.' Here she stopped, and laid her hand upon her heart, as though she could scarce draw breath. To spare her, and help her out with a narration that gave such evident pain, I put a question.

'You knew her, did you not, from the moment that you first set eyes on her in Cecil's clothes?'

'I knew her while she stood by you in the box, Master Fred. I am too much used to dress in masculine attire myself to fail to detect such masquerading in others; but the recognition brought about another knowledge—the corroboration of a suspicion much more terrible, much more strange, that had haunted me for years.'

'What suspicion?' inquired I. 'What know-

ledge could be more terrible or strange, than that about which I am here to speak?'

'Ah, you have forgotten,' said Ruth vehemently. 'But I, who loved him with all his faults from his cradle even to that awful day when he and I were buried in one living grave—I, for whom he toiled, and to whom, for so many years, he was father and mother, and lover, and all—I had not forgotten my brother Richard!'

'But how did the sight of Jane, disguised in man's attire, remind you of your poor brother?'

'Because I saw in her *his murderer*! Yes, it struck none of you wise gentlemen in Sandylandshire that Batty's story might, after all, be true; but it struck me from the very first. It was Cecil's gold that bribed the poor wretch to remove the poles, and it was Cecil's self that placed it in his hands: that is, this spurious Cecil—not my own. No, no; not he who risked his life to save my brother, and who did save me—oh, would that he had let me die!—but this one.'

Ruth was sobbing, as an angry child sobs, partly with fury, partly with grief, and her eyes flashed fire through her tears.

'She did not wish to murder Richard, I know; she wanted to kill me, the village wench whose beauty had witched her brother. But since she could not find the chance to do it unless by slaying another victim also, my Richard was sacrificed. What mattered the life of a mere country clown like him, when weighed against my lady's prospects!—*Not capable of it?*' (This in reply to some feeble protest of my own, though, to say truth, I had no doubt that Ruth was right, and that the true explanation of Batty's story had been found at last.) 'You saw her face when she stood at our cottage door—the first time that I ever met her brother—and yet you say not capable of it! Why, there was Murder in her eyes that very day!'

When I recalled that scene to mind, I could not deny it. I remembered Jane's outburst of contempt and fury; her patient submission under Cecil's passionate rebuke; and then her brooding silence on the journey home. It was not likely, being what she was, that she should ever forget that it was through Ruth that her brother's wrath (for the first time in their lives, as I believe) had been evoked against her; and then, as weeks went on, and Cecil's love for Ruth came to his sister's ears (as no doubt it did), was it likely, being what she was, that she should have borne it tamely, unless she had had some scheme within herself, like this, which should have ended all at a single blow? I called to mind that hour upon the sand-cliff when I saw her coming from the pinewood above Wayford, pale with rage; the fiendish plot that had been so long smouldering in her mind, doubtless just ripe for action; and, again, how she had kept her room from indisposition—the better, probably, to slip out unobserved in Cecil's clothes, and bribe the foolish lad; and then again, how, as I had noticed when the news of the catastrophe came to us in the Hall, she alone of all the audience seemed neither surprised nor shocked, but only looked to see the effect of it on Cecil. She alone, too, had abstained on that occasion from coming to the sand-cliff: resolute and cruel as her nature had shewed itself to be, she had not been equal to the task of watching by the pit-mouth while the bodies of her victims were being dragged out into the sunlight, that one, at

least, was never to behold again. Her self-control had broken down, too, upon the night when the constable brought word that the real murderer had been discovered in her unconscious instrument, Batty, though that, of course, had scarcely excited our surprise, much less suspicion. Read by the light of this startling discovery, in short, all the seeming inconsistencies in Jane's conduct were accounted for, and her motives explained.

'But how was it, Ruth, knowing what you did,' inquired I, 'that you yourself kept silence?'

'I knew nothing, Master Fred,' returned she vehemently. 'Is it not enough that my poor brother's dying words should ring in my ears, demanding justice even now, without your taunts to back them! I did not know; I scarcely even guessed. A black suspicion haunted me, as I have said, but that was all. I strove to think it baseless, for Mr Cecil's sake. You think I did not love him; and you used to think so. Ah me, I would I had loved him less, and justice more!'

'And yet, Ruth, when I went to wish you good-bye for him, as it seemed probable for ever'—

'It was for ever,' interrupted she. 'I knew that, whatever might happen. This Jane, I felt, would never suffer us to meet again; and hatred of her, and above all, this dread suspicion of her, overshadowed all my being, and chilled my love. But do not say I did not love him, when even now, when I know all for certain, my love is still so strong that, for his sake, I permit my brother's blood to cry out to me in vain, and her to live on unpunished! I told her so, in this room, to her face; and it was the bitterest drop in all the cup of her humiliation to know that she owed her life to the love I bore her brother!'

A look of triumph lit up Ruth's haggard features for an instant, but it passed away, and gave place to the same dejection as before.

'It matters not now, Master Fred,—when nothing matters—but you have been very good to me, and such friends are very, very scarce with such as I, and I should like to keep your good opinion of me when I can. You are doubtless thinking that I ought not to have taken Cecil's money. But why not, since Jane had killed my bread-winner? True, I did not know it then for certain, but I guessed it. And if my guess was right, it would be some beginning of punishment to her to know that her brother had made provision for me, and was still bent on making me his wife. But I myself had lost that hope. While his sister lived, I could never have wedded him; nor, as I then thought, even had she died! I strove to shut him from my thoughts; I changed my name, and made my way in life unknown to all, till accident threw you and me together. Bereft of friends, and utterly forlorn—though always in a whirl of gaiety—the thought of seeing your kind, honest face was very welcome to me; and when the opportunity offered itself of doing you some service in my profession, I could not but seize it. You will do me justice as to Cecil even then; I forbade you to let him know that you had discovered me; I declined to receive the letters that he had confided for me to your hands; I closed the door of my heart against him all I could. But when the news came of Jane's death, my love returned for him as with a torrent's rush, and forced the door. I strove to forget his sister, and to remember only him, and, alas for me, I succeeded! You avoided me, for some reason—

probably because you perceived the hope that was springing up within me, and knew, from some conversation with your cousin, that it must needs be barren—but I determined, nevertheless, to see him; and I *should* have seen him, though not so soon, had you not brought him with you to the play. What a moment was that when my eyes first lit upon your Cecil, and shewed me Jane! I have told you what that single glance revealed to me; but I have not told you all. Not only did I recognise in your disguised cousin the murderer of my brother, but, as I hope for Heaven's mercy, I thought for the moment that she had murdered Cecil also! If, when you obeyed my summons, you had not brought her with you behind the scenes, I would have had her brought to me at all hazards: not for your sake even, dear Master Fred, nor for your wife's sake, would I have spared that woman, had she proved to be the thrice-dyed villain for whom I took her! For Cecil's sake, I was ready to let her go unpunished for the act, which, designed for my own destruction, slew my brother; and for Cecil's sake (had she turned out to be his murderer), I would have had her hanged, as sure as dawn will break to-day! Imagine what I felt, as I stood side by side with her—I in my page's dress, unrecognised by her, but she disguised from me in vain—and asked her to this house upon the morrow! Once standing face to face with one another, I knew that I should learn the truth; and the next day we stood so. You did not come and hear her tell it—the whole story of her fraud from first to last—but, take my word for it, she told it truly. Next to herself and *you*—yes, *you*, I say—she loved her brother, and never thought of harming him, nor profiting by any harm to him, until she saw him perish before her eyes. The account she wrote you of the catastrophe was a correct one, if you read "Cecil" for "Jane;" except that the crevasse down which her brother fell was not so deep as she described it to be. He was dead, of course, poor soul! and past all aid; but it was necessary for her purpose that the body should never be brought to light; so she pointed out *another* crevasse, which seemed to be without bottom, as the scene of the calamity. I cannot say when she resolved to play this hateful part; I don't think she quite knows herself. Perhaps the idea first crossed her while she was still upon the glacier, and grew and grew with every minute of fruitless search, until she reached the inn, when the opportunity of changing her clothes for Cecil's before her arrival was perceived, presented itself, and overcame her last lingering scruples: then it took final shape. I asked her motives: they were love for you, and hate of Eleanor. She could not bear to think that Cecil's money should enable you to wed your bride; and just as a good mother says of her tempted daughter: "I would rather see her dead before my eyes, than that she should marry such a one;" so Jane said to herself: "I will see the man I love defrauded of his rights, and I myself be his defrauder, rather than that he shall wed my rival."

'That is like enough, Ruth,' said I thoughtfully. 'But how came you to know it? What spell had you to work with, that could make my cousin Jane so frank?'

'The shadow that the gallows casts before it,' returned Ruth fiercely. 'My first words to her let her know her life was in my hands. You

should have seen her dark, false face—so like to Cecil's, and yet so little like—when I cried: "Murderess! you killed my brother; have you also killed your own?" I knew that she was guiltless before she spoke; no one could have refused credit to that look of passionate denial. Great Heaven! what fire abides in that heart of flint. As though she had been some guileless innocent accused of shame she scarcely knew by name, she scorched me with her scorn. "She kill her Cecil—she! Her precious Cecil!"—as though my love was dross, while hers was gold.

'But she expressed remorse and sorrow surely, penitence for her crime—I mean for that crime at Gatcombe?'

'I know not if she did or not. I did not speak of that—I could not trust myself to do so, but strove to put it from me altogether, since she was to go unpunished. I did but shew her she was in my power, and then spoke of Cecil only, and her fraud.'

'Then it was through you,' said I, 'that Jane bade us good-bye, and wanted to have made such amends to us as lay within her power?'

'Not wholly so,' said Ruth. 'Weeks ago, she told me, she had been on the point of putting an end to herself (as you would witness), and making restitution to you that way. She took no pleasure, so she said (and I believe her), in her ill-got wealth (though she strove at first to do so), and would have gladly parted with it to its proper owner, if she could have done so without suspicion. Even that she would have risked, she said (and I believe her), but for Cecil's sake. To have her crime discovered, would have been to blacken Cecil's name and memory.'

'And it was that reflection which weighed with you, Ruth, also, and earned her pardon?'

'Pardon? No; she never earned it: it is not mine to give. I have not, or I had not, even pity for her. But it was for Cecil's sake I spared her, and for yours. I could not bring such public shame on you and Eleanor.'

'Thanks, thanks!' said I, with fervour. 'It would indeed have been hard to bear.—Where is this wretched woman?'

'At an hotel at Swanby, on the Sussex coast. That is, she was.'

'We shall then be able to communicate with her at once?'

'She will be at that address, if she be alive.'

'Do you think the tidings of our late discovery will kill her, then?'

Ruth shook her head. 'No,' said she gravely. 'She will kill herself. I said just now, I had no pity for her, but I did feel pity while I spoke, and I feel it now—the pity that one feels, in any case, for those whom Death has carried before the Eternal Judge.—There is no hurry now'—for I had risen to my feet in horror at this confirmation of my fears. 'It happened hours ago, if it did happen.'

'Aunt Ben has offered to go down,' said I. 'But if anything so terrible is likely to have occurred, I should not like to let her do so alone.'

'Go with her, Master Fred,' is my advice.'

'I will, and let us still hope for the best.'

'Yes,' sighed Ruth, as she shook hands, for I was in haste to be gone now, 'for whatever is the best.'

Her last words sank within me, for they

reminded me again of Jane's proviso, that she would never again attempt her life unless I myself should make excuse for it, and if I did not make excuse for it, I should now for certain find no cause for wonder.

A GREAT MONEY-MAKER.

UPON the 23d of November 1662, Mr Pepys wrote in his Diary: 'I hear to-day old rich Audley is dead, and left a very great estate, and made a great many poor families rich, not all to one. Among others, one Davis, my old school-fellow at Paul's, and since a bookseller in Paul's Churchyard; and it seems do forgive one man six thousand pounds which he had wronged him of, but names not his name; but it is well known to be the scrivener in Fleet Street, at whose house he lodged.' The little fellow Davis, as his old schoolmate calls him, was one of the executors to the man of wealth's will, and seems to have lost no time in turning his friend's death to business account; for we find his name attached as publisher to a book entitled *The Way to be Rich according to the Practice of the Great Audley, who began with two hundred pounds, in the year 1605, and dyed worth four hundred thousand pounds, this present November 1662*. This curious little work Mr Pepys describes as a serious pamphlet, containing some good things worth his minding. The writer of it, unlike biographers now-a-days, does not wax enthusiastic over his hero, as a paragon to be idolised, nor trouble his readers with stories of his childish days, in order to shew the boy was father to the man. Indeed, he does not profess to tell the story of Audley's life from the cradle to the grave, but as 'the great way of ordering the several parts of our lives to such advantages as may arise to a competent estate, was peculiar to this person,' merely sets down for the public good his way and practice as far as it conduced to that end; whether as an example or a warning, we are left somewhat in doubt, as neither praise nor blame is bestowed upon Audley's system, which was in truth nothing but the very sharpest of sharp practice.

Whether, like many another great money-maker, Audley came to town as a raw country lad with the traditional three-halfpence in his pocket, or whether he was a native of that Tiddlers' ground, 'the City,' is more than we know. In 1597, he appears to have been a sort of article clerk in the service of a clerk to the Compter, sharpening his faculties by intercourse with black-sheep of divers sorts; and fitting himself for future opportunities by sitting up till the small-hours poring over law-books, so contriving to order his studies that his notes served him as material for writing sundry 'seasonable things,' which put money in his purse, and enabled him to collect a good library—that is, from a legal point of view—and save a little besides. Without being pound foolish, Audley was decidedly penny wise, and never wasted even that humble coin, taking care not to spend one penny, as he was fond of boasting, except upon absolute necessity. Men of sanguine disposition, he averred, were sure to come to grief at last; so he made it a rule never to expend any of his cash in the entertainment of friends upon mere hope;

although he did not hesitate at displaying spurious liberality when certain his sprat would bring a whale to land. Out of his clerkly earnings, Audley set apart six shillings a week for food, but it was very seldom he had occasion to disburse so much, generally contriving to save more than half of it by good management. He used to meet his master's clients every morning at an inn in Fetter Lane, and again at an ordinary in the middle of the day; and as he only allowed himself a groat for his dinner, we infer that if he dined at all, it was at the expense of the clients aforesaid. This thrift and carefulness, and possibly the custom he brought to the house, made him a favourite with mine host of the *Golden Lion*, a very thriving man, who employed him to keep his books, and in return gave him his food and other fair advantages. By this arrangement, Audley had his six shillings a week at his disposal, and he let it out 'until his time was out' for the sum of sixty pounds down. Upon the death of the innkeeper, Audley found himself appointed one of his executors, to whom a certain house passed under the will; to this house two acres of land were joined, but the land was claimed by a legatee named Killegrew. The executors resisted the claim, and although there was no doubt about the matter, Killegrew was forced to submit to be robbed, since he could not establish his right to other property of greater value for want of evidence only Audley and his fellow-cheat could produce. This seems to have been Audley's first bit of 'practice' on his own account.

As soon as he had a little cash by him, he took to providing bail for prisoners who could pay well for it, and bought up desperate debts, which he thought he was clever enough to recover. One Miller, a linen-draper, owed a merchant two hundred pounds, and being pressed, became a bankrupt. The creditor gladly sold the debt to Audley for forty pounds, who then went to the draper, and agreed to lend him fifty pounds under a formal contract that Miller should, within two years of his re-establishment in business, discharge both the old and new debt by paying 'a penny doubled' upon the first day of each month for twenty successive months. Miller opened his shop again; when the time of grace expired, Audley appeared to claim his due, receiving his first instalment of one penny upon the 1st of October 1608; upon the 1st of November he received twopence; on the 1st of December, fourpence; and so went on until February came round, when his debtor became suddenly aware of the trap into which he had fallen, and paid Audley five hundred pounds to cancel the bond; and doubtless congratulated himself at getting out of his bad bargain at that sacrifice, seeing if he had gone on doubling his penny, he would have had to find no less than £2184 upon the first of the twentieth month, while Audley would have altogether received £4369 for his ninety pounds.

By the time his engagement with the clerk of the Compter came to an end, Audley was ready to set up in business for himself. Reserved and close in manner, sparing of words, decent in dress, well known to those whom it concerned as a shrewd, capable man, he had no lack of clients; and, being an adept in the technicalities of the law, he was both able and willing to make his skill that way profitable, by taking advantage of the ignorance

and carelessness of those with whom he had to deal. Sometimes he would join with others in a mercantile venture, and when he did so, he never failed to reap the best part of the profit, 'so vexing his partners, that they would rather forego their right, than undergo a suit with him.' He supplied an indigent man of quality with six hundred pounds, for which he was to receive an annuity of ninety-six pounds for a term of nineteen years—the annuity being made payable half-yearly, and charged upon an estate worth some eight hundred a year. Before the term expired, the borrower died; his heir neglected to pay Audley upon the appointed day, and he at once obtained execution upon the property; 'and so, for six hundred pounds, in forfeiture and one way and another, he gained five thousand pounds.' He bought another estate for thirteen thousand four hundred pounds, sold a portion of the timber upon it for three thousand pounds, and then, parcelling the land into thirty-two lots, disposed of the whole in less than twelve months, clearing at the end just six thousand five hundred pounds by the transaction. Finding dealing in land so profitable, Audley took much pains to make himself hail-fellow with the stewards of landed gentlemen, that he might, through them, prey upon the necessities of their masters. For example: one of these false servants let Audley into the secret that his master's affairs were in such a state, that in a year or two he would be compelled to turn a part of his property into cash. Acting on the money-lender's advice, the steward so managed matters that when the time came, and Audley appeared as the would-be purchaser, the ill-served land-owner's books shewed a rental so much below that actually received, that Audley obtained the land for four thousand pounds less than its fair worth; and he and the steward shared the plunder between them, afterwards compounding with their consciences by putting half the above sum in the pocket of their victim, by treating another of his estates in the reverse fashion, and cheating somebody else into buying it at that much above its true value. Like the typical Yankee, the Great Audley gloried in his knavish tricks. When a borrower, agast at his extortionate demands, exclaimed: 'What, do you not intend to use a conscience?' he answered: 'Why, sir, I do hereafter; we moneyed men must balance accounts. If you do not pay me, you cheat me; but if you do, I cheat your lordship!' When reproached with having victimised some unfortunate clergyman, he justified himself on the ground that 'the little a man hath of a righteous man's is better than if he had all the riches of the ungodly.'

His next move was to take chambers in the Temple, and set his active scriveners at work to bring the heedless scapegraces abounding in that quarter into his clutches. 'Nor were the youngsters so needy as he was ready to furnish them with money—sometimes with a courteous violence forcing upon them more than they desired, provided the security was good, and the advantage great.' In a friendly way, he would advise spend-thrifts to get rid of the straggling outlying parts of their estates, which they would hardly miss; and if they took his disinterested advice, he was always ready to buy their lands at half their value; 'and when the poor gentleman had, with his money, stopped one gap of prodigality, he

would open another; and now the principal, the usury, the usury upon usury, swelled the debt until the estate was sold; and then the old man knew that when half the estate was gone, the gallant would live as if he enjoyed the whole, and then, amazingly cunningly, he would put him upon such projects in hope of recovery as were sure to bring utter ruin.'

Out of his ill-gotten gains, Audley bought a place in the Court of Wards for three thousand pounds, in which he is credited with doing some good, for a consideration, of course, by taking sundry heirs under his protection, and thwarting certain great persons who would have made preys of them—the relatives of the said heirs being evidently believers in the wisdom of setting a thief to catch a thief; but the chief use Audley made of his official position was to practise the art of simony made easy. We are told that although the three honourable persons who presided over the Court of Wards looked upon all livings falling to their disposal in a proper manner as livings to be given to worth, not wealth, yet Audley 'made great advantage of such things, that in vain did those masters throw away the bribes which this servant might catch at their first rebound, yea, before ever they came to the ground. He had the best way for the clean conveyance of simony of any man in England, so that the ways of simony which were used in the ancient times were but bungling to his cunning contrivance; his argument in defence being, that if the clergy could conscientiously pay money for their benefices, he could as conscientiously receive it. What a gold mine his office proved to him may be guessed by his answer to one who inquired its annual value—that it might be worth some thousands to the holder if he would go to heaven as soon as he died, twice as much if he would go to purgatory, and nobody could tell how much if he would adventure to hell! When the Court of Wards was abolished, he said it was like losing a member, while ordinary losses were as the shaving of his beard, which would grow faster for the operation.

Mammon's pirates often sail under a religious flag, and unscrupulous seekers after riches, who would fain seem the things they are not, are found helping to build churches and chapels, and heading charitable subscription lists. Audley, equally sensible of the value of appearances, was able to adopt a less expensive plan. 'He took care to accompany himself with some grave and reverend divine to his dying day, from which, if he gained not piety, he gained the repute of it. You should see in his chamber a large Bible upon the table, and *Bishop Andrews' Sermons*, and, if you surprised him not, you might find him busy with one or the other.' He was a regular church-goer, although he professed to be scandalised at the extravagant notions of clergymen who desired to enjoy incomes of hundreds a year, when fifty or sixty pounds might suffice any honest man to buy meat, drink, clothes, and a few books.

Although he never parted with a penny without getting his pennyworth for it, Audley, while very economical in his personal habits, was not exactly miserly. He always dressed well, according to the fashion of the time. 'The best is best cheap,' was his motto; therefore his clothes were always of the best material, and particularly clean, for he held that dust and dirt were more harmful than

honest wear, and that the best husbandry was to have a variety of all sorts of clothes, so that he might have his choice for wear, and all be kept clean and handsome. His servants he kept upon board-wages, and never wasted any corrective words upon them; if they did not suit him, he discharged them. Acting up to his maxim, that the best compost to manure the ground was the dust from the master's shoes, he trusted little to underlings, so that a thrifty fellow who had served him for thirty years complained he had been unable to lay by more than four hundred pounds. His servants, we may be sure, were not kept for show; and he was much disgusted with one of his clients, who never came to borrow money but he brought a large retinue with him—hired for the occasion. This gentleman being rather too polite one day at parting, Audley stopped him with: 'Spare your compliments, sir, for I daresay I shall soon see you again; but let me salute your servants, whom I shall never see more!' This was an extraordinary outbreak on the money-lender's part, for it was a favourite saying with him, that 'he who would lose his friend for a jest deserves to die a beggar in the bargain, although some think their conceits like mustard—not good except they bite.'

If mere success in accumulating wealth entitles a man to be called 'great,' Audley certainly deserved the epithet, for although he died possessed of less than a million, he was undoubtedly one of the richest men of his time; and if we make allowance for the change in the value of money, few Englishmen have left as large a fortune behind them; and it is to be hoped few may be able to do so, if they can find no honester means to such an end than the way to be rich according to the practice of the Great Audley.

TRUE TO ONE.

THERE is a dream of olden time

That charms me, willy-nilly,

It's so divine, and so sublime,

That most folks call it silly:

A dream of an ideal knight,

Who summed his devoir briefly—

For heaven and for his lady bright,

And for his lady chiefly.

Her love to gain, all toil and pain

He bore with long endeavour,

In life and death, of perfect faith,

And true to one for ever.

Did love look back from her sweet eyes,

He dared the whole world fully;

Did fate deny the longed-for prize,

He sighed, and still loved truly.

Though far more fair the rest might be,

He passed and scarcely heeded;

Though they might greet him graciously,

He only cared if she did.

Through good and ill he journeyed still,

With heart that wavered never,

In life and death of perfect faith,

And true to one for ever.

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